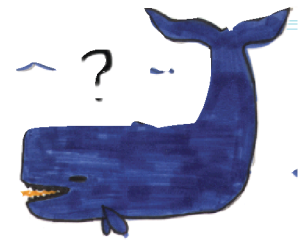


# Powerful Questions

The Powerful Questions technique is used to build comprehension, inferential thinking, listening skills, understanding, and interest. Either an object or image are used as the focal point for questions. After the object or image have been revealed, the students initially observe the object or image, then share questions from their observations. This technique develops inquiry skills while enhancing observation abilities. It is important that no questions are answered during the exercise. Ultimately quality questions frame deeper answers and understanding. An extension is *The Question Game* as used by journalists.

## Object or Image

Either an object or an image work well for this exercise. When presenting an object refer to it as a common object (or similar generic term). This stimulates enhanced observation skills, especially when an object might be several different things. With an image or photograph, it is best to choose one that has some unknown to it (e.g. a half built igloo - is it being built or taken apart?). It is an excellent tool to use an image from a text or book that is being studied as an introduction. Newspapers are also an excellent source of images which becomes an excellent anticipatory set prior to reading the article.



## Order of Technique

1—State *you will be shown a common object (or image) which we'll ask questions about*. Initially they will be shown the object (or image) and quietly observe it. The students could closely gathered around the object, the teacher could be walking around the room, or each small group could have one of the objects. The students are informed we will only ask questions—they then start presenting their questions. It is best the teacher doesn't repeat the questions, instead having the students repeat their own questions so the focus is on them and they hone their presentation skills. They will be able to see the object or image throughout the time they are sharing questions. An extension is pair/share or small group sharing of questions prior to whole group sharing. This could also be done during the technique to further develop questions.

2—If the object or image is something they are studying, the questions might be recorded on poster paper. In higher grades two students would write the questions and in lower grades the teacher would write the questions. The person who asked each question might also be noted to honor them when using the questions during a later study.

3—The teacher never provides answers and only occasionally asks a question themselves. They might ask a question to offer a different frame of reference or a deeper extension. Examples include *who took the photograph* or *who invented it*.

4—Reread all the presented questions to that point several times during Powerful Questions. This recap honors the presented questions while stimulating ideas for new inquiry.

5—Excellent precursor to using a Panoramic Book (see handout on). Select an image or photograph from the Panoramic Book that provides an element of the unknown to stimulate curiosity and interest.

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